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Ministry of Advanced Education

$15.2-MILLION THOMPSON RIVERS CAMPUS OFFICIALLY OPENS

WILLIAMS LAKE – Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell joined Rick Hansen, Thompson Rivers University officials and community members today for the official opening of the institution's new $15.2-million campus in Williams Lake, providing space for more than 1,000 students.

"Government's investment in this new campus improves access for students in the region and provides more opportunities to get the education they need for the future," said Coell. "The students attending this campus can learn, live and work in Williams Lake, building the local economy with vital skills like nursing, child and youth care and the trades."

The Ministry of Advanced Education provided $12 million and TRU contributed the additional $3.2 million to build the nearly 7,000 square-metre campus, which is larger than a football field. It houses a new library, 13 additional classrooms, science and computer labs, seminar rooms, large workshops for trades training and 40 faculty offices. The campus in Williams Lake helps TRU continue to provide regional education opportunities as part of the mandate it was given in the 2004 transformation from a university-college into a teaching-focused university.

"The new campus is a first-class post-secondary facility that will meet the needs of learners in the Williams Lake community and the region," said TRU president Roger Barnsley.

The grand opening of the wireless campus was celebrated with a number of official speakers, a blessing by the local First Nations and the conferral of an honorary doctor of letters on Rick Hansen, president and CEO of the Rick Hansen Foundation.

"I am truly honoured to be a part of this exciting day. Thompson Rivers University's new campus is an exciting opportunity for Williams Lake and for thousands of young Canadians that will study here in pursuit of their dreams," said Hansen, who was born and raised in Williams Lake. Twenty years ago this week, Hansen wheeled through his hometown on his Man In Motion World Tour – a dream that continues to fuel his work today to improve the lives of people with spinal cord injury and related disabilities and advance research towards a cure.

In the past five years, the Province has provided more than $1 billion in new funding for capital projects on campuses across B.C., and has allocated almost $800 million more in capital funding by 2009 to support post-secondary education. Government has also funded more than 17,000 new seats at B.C. universities, colleges and university colleges.

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